

WRITTEN AND
PENCILLED BY
**JASON
ARNETT**

INKS BY
**SOLOMON
KRESNIK**

<WELCOME BACK, Mrs. GODDARD!
IT'S ALWAYS A GRAND DAY WHEN
YOU COME TO VISIT!>

<THANK YOU, ELARA. IT'S NICE
TO BE BACK. YOU ALWAYS
HAVE THE BEST IN FRUITS AND
VEGETABLES.
HOW MUCH FOR THESE?>

<ONLY THE BEST, Mrs.
GODDARD. FOR YOU---
THE LOWEST PRICE.>

<YOU'RE FAR TOO
KIND, ELARA. I
THANK YOU.>

*TRANSLATED FROM TAMIL, ---J.

<MY APOLOGIES FOR THE
INTERRUPTION, MY FRIEND.
THIS IS IMPORTANT, TOO.>

BRRT

<AS
YOU
MUST.>

<THANK YOU.>

Sigh

I SEE. I'LL BE
THERE SHORTLY.
THANK YOU.

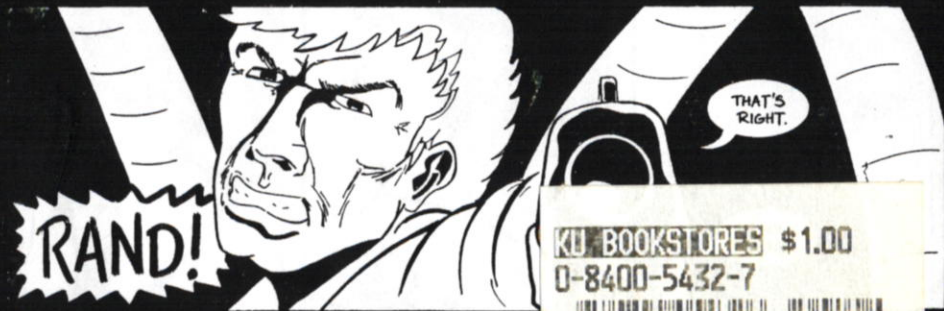
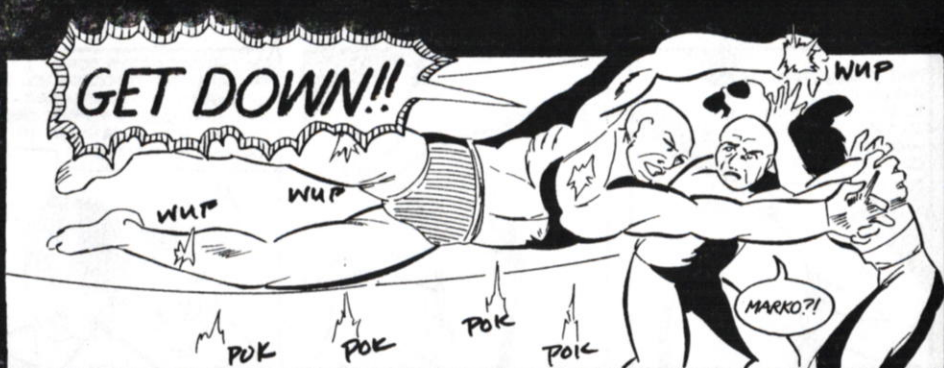
YES?
HE'S
AWAKE AND
ASKING FOR
YOU.

<MANGOES AND
TOMATOES AT
NO CHARGE.>

<NO, ELARA. YOUR
FAMILY NEEDS
THINGS, TOO.>

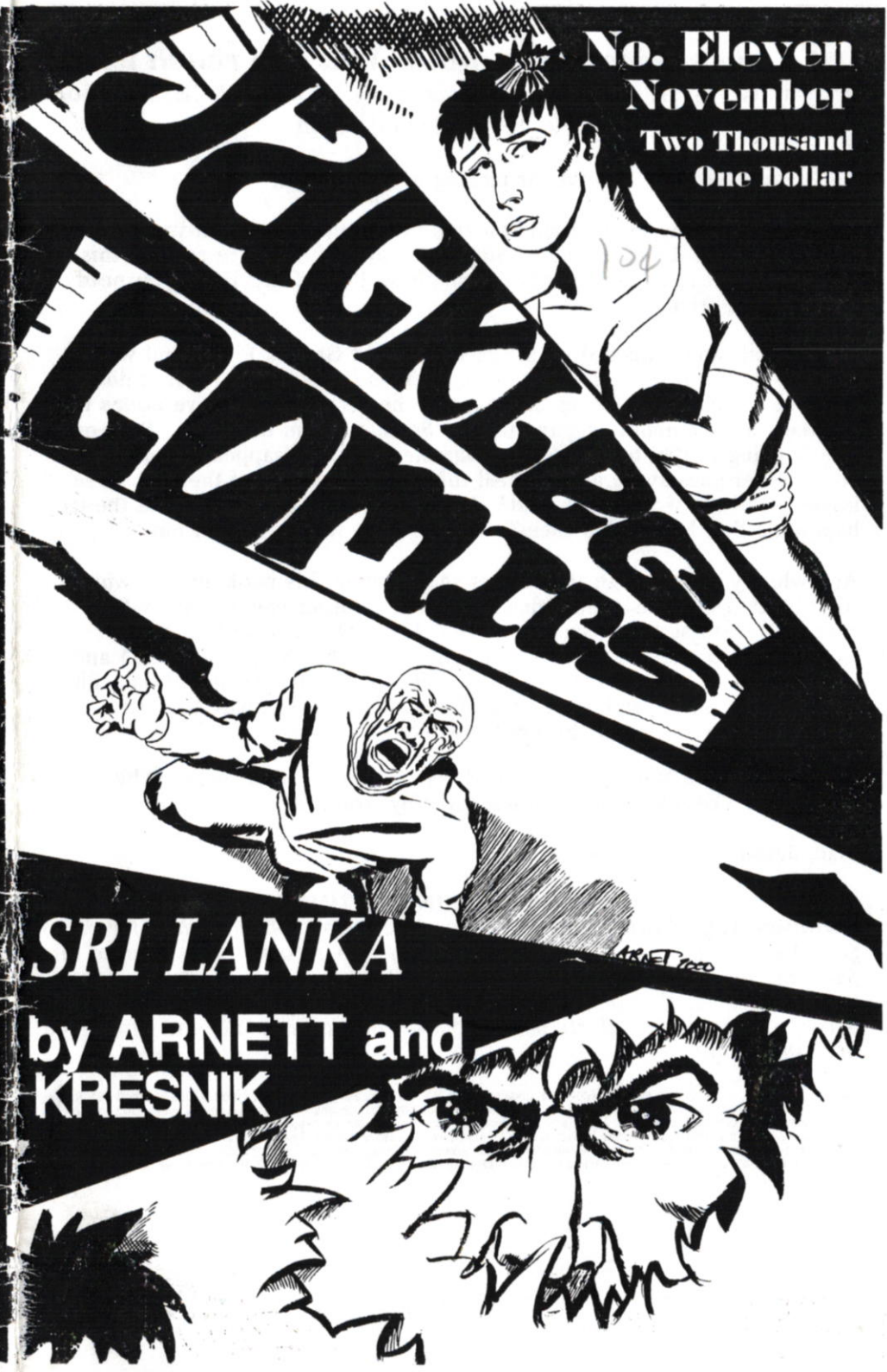
<TAKE THE MONEY
AND GIVE TRUVENI
MY BEST.>





Next month on November 29th...
The grande finale

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We love letters and e-mail! You can reach us at:
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Hello and welcome! Thanks for picking up this book...

Well, I'm not going to go on and on about a bunch of stuff that you four readers don't really care about. Suffice to say that if you're reading this text intro instead of diving right in where we left off last issue, you need serious help, friend.

Next month was supposed to be the triple-sized Grande Finale and well --- it won't be. In order to keep on our monthly schedule, we'll break it down into our regular-sized issues and expand the series from twelve issues to fourteen, and *someone* is going to die. Someone from this issue. Someone else is going to die, too. Another character will be disappearing forever, and another goes away, as well. All this over the course of the next three issues. Will the world really end? And do Solomon and Jenny find the true happiness that has eluded them? Tune in next month to find out.

And while you're here in the comics shop buying this book and showing it to all your friends, ask your friendly retailer to order you a copy of Jai Nitz's excellent self-published book NOVA VOLO. He's written some wonderful short stories, (the VERY funny Con Sketch among them!) and recruited some top talent to help tell them. Folks like Kevin Nowlan, Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Mick Gray along with Greg Kirkpatrick. It's available from Diamond through Previews.

See you again on November 29th with Part 1 of 3 of "8x8" with art by Arnett and Kresnik. This month's cover by Arnett.

Ciao, Jason.

FOR THOSE JOINING US TODAY...

Solomon Wyndham fainted when his wife (who he thought dead for thirty years) suddenly appeared in **Abby Mabry's** house after Abby rescued him from the clutches of **Baron Donovan** and **Jackson Rand**, who were trying to kill him [whew!]. Now, **Jenny** is all set to explain to Solomon why she has barely aged in the last thirty years, how she didn't really die, and why it had to be that way...

JACKLEG COMICS 11 NOVEMBER 2000. Story, art and characters (c) 2000 by Jason Arnett. Published by Jason Arnett dba Jackleg Comics. All Rights Reserved. This is a work of fiction, so any resemblance between persons living or dead, events, institutions or locales is purely coincidental. All names, characters, places and incidents are a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the express written permission of the creators. Except for the purposes of review. Watch this space for announcements about upcoming projects for 2001. And d'you think Alan Moore should be the self-appointed saviour of mainstream comics? Or would it be Brian Michael Bendis? Either way, super heroes are in good hands.





I MEAN, YOU DO REALIZE JUST HOW INSANE THIS SOUNDS DON'T YOU? "I MARRIED GOD!" THAT'S GOING TO LOOK GREAT ON THE COVER OF THE WEEKLY STAR ENQUIRER!

SOL, I'M NOT GOD.

WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT GOD AND THIS GUSTAVO IS NOT THE DEVIL, THEN HOW THE HELL DO I EXPLAIN MY EYES? IT CAN'T BE A MIRACLE, CAN IT? THAT SURGEON WAS ONE OF YOUR STAFF, WASN'T HE?

YES.

AND THEN BACK IN THE OFFICE WITH DONOVAN, THAT WAS YOU TALKING, WASN'T IT?



.....
.....
yes.

WASN'T IT?!

SO, YOU RATHER CONVINCINGLY FAKE YOUR OWN DEATH, LEAVE THE WORLD YOU'VE CREATED, HEALED MY BEYOND-ALL-HOPE EYES, SENT ME VISIONS AND CAUSED ME TO SPEAK YOUR WORDS! I'VE SEEN A LOT IN MY TIME... BUT THIS...

I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU COME FROM, LADY, BUT THAT'S PRETTY GOD-LIKE TO ME!

SOL, PLEASE--- CALM DOWN.

SO WHERE THE HELL WERE YOU WHEN RAND KILLED OUR SON? WHERE WERE YOU THEN?



DAMN IT, JENNY.
HOW COULD YOU LET THAT HAPPEN?



MARKO'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU, SOL.

THAT'S WHAT HE DOES, JENNY. YOU'LL GET USED TO IT, SAME AS I DID.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU, TOO. YOU SHOULD REST MORE...



...YOU DID TAKE A NASTY FALL.

YOU KNOW, I NEVER HAD THIS MANY NURSES WHEN I WAS A PRACTICING SURGEON.



PLASTIC SURGEON, SOLOMON.

YES, BUT I'M STILL THE DOCTOR, DEAR



SO YOU AND MARKO AND ABBY WILL HAVE TO BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY I'M OKAY. AND STOP TREATING ME LIKE I'M BRITTLE AND GOING TO SHATTER.

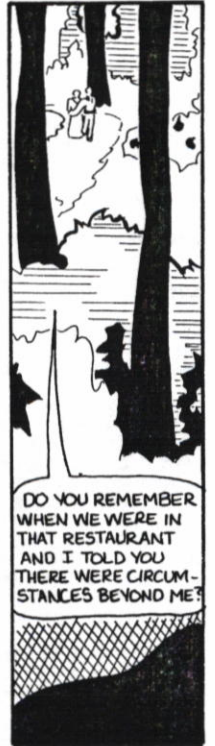
I'M FINE.

OKAY, OKAY,... YOU WIN.



MM HM. YOU SHOULDN'T 'GIVE UP' SO EASILY, LOVE. YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ME.

SO NOW YOU CAN TELL ME WHERE YOU'VE BEEN ALL OF MY LIFE. I MEAN, THE LAST I SAW OF YOU WAS A TWISTED, BURNED UP CAR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AGO.



DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE IN THAT RESTAURANT AND I TOLD YOU THERE WERE CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND ME?



THAT NIGHT I LEFT YOU AND BELLAMY, I *KNEW* I WASN'T COMING BACK. THERE WAS AN EMERGENCY ONLY I COULD HANDLE.

I'D SET UP MY WILL, THE INSURANCE AND A TRUST SO THAT YOU AND BELL WOULD'N'T LACK FOR ANYTHING.

WE DIDN'T. I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT THE MONEY, BUT, THANK YOU.

YOU'RE WELCOME. AND MOST CAME FROM AN INVESTMENT ADVICE COLUMN IN THE NEWSPAPER. BUT I DROVE OUT TO THE OLD QUARRY ON HIGHWAY 51. I PUT A SIMULACRUM OF MYSELF IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT AND MADE SURE THE CAR RAN OFF THE EDGE.

A WHAT? YOU---WH--- WHY?

SSH. I'M GETTING TO THAT PART. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU. PLEASE BE PATIENT AND LET ME EXPLAIN?

I STOOD ON THE RIM OF THE QUARRY AND WATCHED IT BURN. I CRIED, SOL. BECAUSE, MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WANTED TO STAY WITH YOU AND BELL.

I WANTED TO BE THAT HAPPY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE. BUT I HAD A RESPONSIBILITY I COULD NOT FORSAKE.

sigh.

NOW COMES THE HARD PART. THE BIT WHERE I NEED YOU TO HAVE FAITH THAT I'M NOT INSANE.

ALL RIGHT.

THE WHOLE TRUTH;

I'M AN ARTIST.

I WAS HIRED BY A MAN NAMED KOZCHEIT TO CREATE A PIECE OF ART BASED ON NATURE AND WHAT WE KNOW OF OUR UNIVERSE.

Mr. KOZCHEIT GAVE ME MONEY, A STUDIO, EQUIPMENT AND A STAFF TO MAKE PLACES THAT USED TO EXIST. OVER THE YEARS, HE'D EMPLOYED DOZENS OF OTHERS TO DO THE SAME, NEVER HAPPY WITH THEIR RESULTS. PERIODICALLY, I'D INSERT MYSELF INTO THE PIECE TO CHECK THE WORK. I COULD SPEND AN EIGHT HOUR SHIFT CHECKING, AND THREE WEEKS PASS INSIDE. IT'S A TERRIBLY EFFICIENT WAY TO WORK. THAT'S WHY I HAVEN'T REALLY CHANGED, SOL. IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT, BUT, ESSENTIALLY, I LIVE ONE YEAR WHILE YOU LIVE THIRTY.

WHEN I TOOK THIS JOB, I WAS... I NEEDED THE MONEY. WHEN I MET YOU, I NEEDED A VACATION. I ADJUSTED TO LIFE HERE, AND I WAS SO ECSTATIC THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO GO HOME. BUT I GOT A CALL TELLING ME I HAD TO. NO ARGUING.



THERE IS MORE THAN ONE 'UNIVERSE' AS YOU KNOW IT, AND SO THERE ARE MANY MORE WORLDS THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.

THESE WORLDS WERE DESIGNED AND BUILT BY OTHERS LIKE ME ON THE WHIMS AND FORTUNES OF THOSE LIKE MY PATRON.

OUR CREATIONS ARE ALL BASED ON OUR HOME AND ARE USED FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES.

ARE YOU SAYING---

SH. I'M TRYING TO... BEAR WITH ME.



WHEN I GOT THERE, *EVERYTHING* WAS IN UTTER CHAOS. A FORMER PROJECT MANAGER NAMED GUSTAVO HAD HIJACKED ALL THE WORK I HAD DONE, EVEN CO-OPTING SOME OF MY PLANS IN FAVOR OF HIS OWN. I NEVER LIKED HIM AND HE WAS THERE ONLY BECAUSE KOZCHEIT WANTED IT THAT WAY.

GUSTAVO HAD STOLEN OR SABOTAGED NEARLY EVERY IMPORTANT PHASE OF THE WORLD I HAD WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD. I FIRED HIM.

MY STAFF AND I WORKED TIRELESSLY TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE AND KEEP ANYONE ELSE FROM TRYING TO DO THE SAME. HE HAD SOME LOYAL FOLLOWERS WHO GOT THE SAME AS HIM.

KOZCHEIT KEPT ALL OF THEM ON HIS PAYROLL, BUT MOVED THEM TO A LESSER PROJECT. ONLY A FEW LEFT ALTOGETHER, SO WE DEVELOPED A SERIES OF LOCKS AND KEYS, HIDING THE DISGUISED KEYS WITHIN THE PROJECT.



WE THOUGHT THAT WAS THE END OF GUSTAVO.

WE WERE VERY WRONG.

KNOWING THAT WE WOULD DETECT HIS DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, HE BEGAN TO RECRUIT AGENTS FROM MY WORLD. THEY HAD TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE CONCEALED KEYS. HE GOT SEVERAL WITH THE PROMISE OF POWER IN RETURN, OTHERS BY USING FORCE OR CHICANERY.

DONOVAN AND RAND ARE HIS MOST RECENT "ACQUISITIONS."



ALL TOLD, HE MANAGED TO GATHER HALF OF ALL THE KEYS BEFORE WE COULD FIGURE OUT A WAY STOP GUSTAVO AND HIS TEAM.

BEAR IN MIND THAT KOZCHEIT DIDN'T WANT TO BE *BOTHERED* WITH ANY OF THIS. ALL THAT MATTERED TO HIM WAS WHETHER I COULD DELIVER MY NEXT PHASE ON TIME.

SO, WE NEEDED AN AGENT OF OUR OWN TO COUNTER WHAT THEY WERE DOING.



you.

AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT, YOU WERE GIVEN DREAMS DETAILING WHERE THE KEYS WERE AND WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE: MOSTLY SEMI-PRECIOUS JEWELS. BECAUSE DONOVAN HAD UNKNOWNLY AMASSED SEVERAL OF THE KEYS, HE WAS DOOMED TO BE YOUR BIGGEST TARGET.

WE NEVER TOLD YOU HOW TO GET THE KEYS, ONLY THAT YOU SHOULD. AND THAT YOU NEEDED TO KEEP THEM SAFE, AS WELL.

heh.

WHAT?

IT'S INTERESTING THAT YOU WOULD CHOOSE TO BE A CAT-BURGLAR TO ACQUIRE THE KEYS. I ASSUMED YOU WOULD USE ALL THE MONEY YOU ALREADY HAD. I WONDER---

D'YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY?